WHILE THE JURY WAS OUT.

BY WILLIAM FREDERICK DIX.

THE mid-morning Colorado sun beat down upon a restless little group of men on the steps of the Fort Morton court house; upon the dusty cottonwood trees growing dispiritedly on each side of the road that stretched away from the little sandy square to become, a few hundred yards below, the main street of the town; and upon the tin roofs of the two-story brick or frame stores on each side of it. The jury had been out over night, and although it was 10 o'clock in the morning, had given no sign. The prisoner had not yet been brought up from the county jail nearby, and the group of men directly interested in the proceedings were sitting and lounging about the steps, smoking and carrying on desultory conversation. The district judge, sitting on the top step, was an eastern college man, about 40 years of age, once an athlete, and still with a trim, slender figure. The only touch of the western in his dress was the grey slouch hat worn straight and firmly set upon his brown hair.

"A pretty bit of grazing land," he was saying to the sheriff, as he looked out over the level prairie, dotted here and there with an adobe shack and occasional herds of cattle.

The sheriff, a brawny, blue-shirted young fellow of 30, with unkempt hair and mustache, uncrossed his booted legs, straightened out one of them, pushed his hand deep into the pocket of his corduroy trousers, and yawned. As his coat was thrust back with the movement the butt of his 44-calibre "gun" might be seen. Without replying, he drew out a large silver watch and studied it absently.

The small boys among the group of hangers-on in front of the steps were beguiling themselves tossing ball, and the prosecuting attorney, a young graduate from the east who had come up from Pueblo, called out:

"Here you are, Johnnie, give us a catch!"

The small boy who had the ball grinned sheepishly and threw it at him.

"Harder, harder!" said the young lawyer cheerily. "That's no way to pitch a ball. Throw it in this way," and the boy's hands were scorched as he caught the return.

"Say, kin you pitch a curve?" he asked. Let's see you do it."

"All right," said Hardy, rising good-naturedly and taking off his coat. "Here you go. Hold on," he added, "you couldn't catch it if I did. Here, Mr. Hackett, go out there and let me throw you a few curves."

The others laughed at this, for Hackett, the senior counsel for the defense, also up from Pueblo for the trial, was an enormous middle-aged Hoosier, six feet two in height and weighing 250 pounds. He had a mass of crisp black hair and wore a black broadcloth frock coat and trousers, low turned down collar and ready made tie. He was slow moving and ponderous, though forceful and shrewd in his profession; deliberate of speech and anything but an athlete.

"Here I'll catch you," exclaimed the junior counsel, Blake, a somewhat lanky, powerfully built westerner, rising and depositing his rough brown sack coat beside Hardy's.

"Gee! you've got muscle," he added, rubbing his hands after the first pass.

"Hurray!" yelled the small boy, "that was a corker. Git on to them curves, Clarence!" he cried in worshipful admiration.

"Wouldn't mind a little of that exercise myself," said the judge, rising interestedly and hesitating on the steps.

"Why not have a little game while we are waiting?" said Hardy, half jokingly. "Come on, sheriff!"

Moved by a common impulse, the little group brightened up, threw away their cigar ends and moved half apologetically into the sandy square. At the left of the court house and adjoining it was a small open field of well trodden, dusty grass, where a scratch ball game was played occasionally and where horses were tethered during court. One of the small boys was dispatched for a suitable bat and ball and a catcher's glove, and by the time the sides were arranged he came racing back with them, highly excited, followed by several other small boys.

No one had the slightest idea of being drawn into a game when he left the steps; but the reaction had worked insidiously. The trial had been a particularly exciting one, and those who had followed it were tired after the three days' strain in the ill-ventilated court room. The sympathies of all had undoubtedly been with the prisoner, although the state had been vigorous in its prosecution and the judge had conscientiously done his duty. Murder had been committed at Jamestown Creek a few months previously, though a change of venue had been obtained to Fort Morton, the prisonner's own town. Copperthwait had always been a quiet, law abiding ranchman. He was under 30 years of age, big, broad-shouldered and swarthy, diffident in manner and somewhat slow of speech, though he had been slowly and thoroughly angered in a quarrel over a bunch of cattle. Six or eight steers had been branded twice, one mark over the other, and the dispute arose over this.

Copperthwait rushed in and slid triumphantly to the plate on his stomach.

Duke, the victim of the shooting, had borne a bad reputation, and the village street was usually more or less uneasy during his infrequent visits. He had killed his man, and had been known to boast of it several times in Flynn's saloon. After this last quarrel he had sworn to shoot Copperthwait on sight. The quarrel had occurred in the morning. That afternoon Copperthwait had just left the Eagle hotel, to mount his mustang tied to the hitching post in front, when Duke happened to turn the corner.

"Here comes Duke!" a bystander exclaimed. Copperthwait started and caught sight of his adversary. Duke stopped short and put his hand behind him, and Copperthwait, quick as a flash, fired once and put a bullet between Duke's eyes. He had offered no resistance to arrest, and now was in the rough little jail near by while the twelve good men and true deliberated in the hot back room under the roof of the court house.

"I guess my hands are a little too soft to play," said the judge good naturedly, feeling a qualm as to the appropriateness of his joining actively in the sport; "but I'll be umpire if you want me."

The two teams were quickly formed, the "Comanches" against the "Sioux." The Sioux won the toss and took the field, and the Comanches were struck out in one, two, three order. When the sides changed, Hardy, the prosecuting attorney, took the box, and Blake, the junior counsel for the defense, caught him. After much urging the judge had consented to preside over first base, since Mr. Hackett had positively refused to play, and had been made umpire by general acclaim. As soon as his honor found himself coatless and on the field he threw himself into the battle with the greatest enthusiasm.

There was many an evidence of "softness" in the condition of the players, and a noticeable tendency to let swift balls go by rather than grapple them with fingers unused to the hard impact. Wild throws to bases were not infrequent, and in consequence there was much base stealing and hilarious sarcasm from the players on both teams. The official relations of these men were, for the time, lost sight of, they were merely healthy, enthusiastic Americans, feeling the joy of tingling blood in their veins, the zest of friendly competition and of physical exercise.

The runs were frequent and the errors numerous, and at the end of the third inning so many hands were sore and so many arms growing stiff that it was mutually decided by the team to call the next inning the last. The score stood 11 runs for the Comanches (the team made up of Judge Hillier, Hardy, Blake, the keeper of the Eagle hotel and one or two other witnesses), and nine for the Sioux, the battery of which was formed by the court clerk and the sheriff, whose heavy long boots, extending far up inside of his corduroys, detracted somewhat from any grace of movement he might have had as he lent his entire soul and mind to the clerk's erratic curves, ably backed up by the assistant prosecutor, the stenographer and several witnesses.

At the beginning of the fourth and concluding inning the deputy sheriff had come up with the prisoner, who was not handcuffed, and they became interested onlookers. Copperthwait's nerve had been superb throughout the trial, and he seemed to take an intense interest in the game.

Just after play had commenced Hardy knocked a hot grounder to short, who fielded the ball swiftly to first base. The baseman caught it, putting Hardy out, and then quietly remarked:

"That settles me. Look at this thumb!"

"See here, old man," Hardy panted, examining it, "it's broken."

"Well, never mind; let somebody take my place. Here, someone—you, Mulligan. Come and take the base. I'm out of it."

"Guess not," said Mulligan, the deputy; "I ain't played ball since"——

"Go on with the game!" cried a dozen others excitedly. "Someone, anyone take the base."

"Here, Copperthwait, play first base; we've only got to hold 'em down this inning, and we'll beat 'em easy. There's one out already."

Copperthwait looked uncertainly at the deputy, then at the judge, and quickly pulled off his coat and stepped to the base. His face showed clearly the prison pallor, and this warm sunlight and fresh air seemed wonderfully sweet to his spirit. Taken suddenly away from the active, vigorous life of the ranch, for seven months confined in a dreary prison, the world had seemed gradually to recede from his life. This sudden contrast of green, open field, ringing with the hearty voices of his fellow man, and the vision of the free, limitless prairie on all sides, was a tragic one to the man. He glanced at the players about him, pausing in the game and thinking only of it.

"Go ahead," he said quietly. "I'll play."

The Comanches failed to make a run during the rest of the inning, and when the Sioux came in they made two runs almost at once, tieing the score, amid great enthusiasm.

As Copperthwait came to the bat it was evident that the psychological moment of the sport had arrived. Everything had been completely forgotten save the game, and so intense was the interest that the approach of the court house janitor was entirely unnoticed. He had come slowly down from the steps, and after a few moments of bewildered surprise stood leaning against a tree near the catcher, watching the prisoner as he slowly moved his bat backward and forward over the plate.

"One ball!" yelled Mr. Hackett, mopping his neck with his handkerchief.

"Two balls!"

"Strike one!"

"Three balls!"

Crack!

The ball flew straight from the bat high above the right fielder's head, and Copperthwait was safe on second before the ball was fielded in.

The janitor began to grow very uneasy and edged slowly down the field toward the first baseman. The crowd yelled as Copperthwait, still panting, edged off toward third. Hardy turned suddenly and tried to catch him napping, but in his excitement he threw a little wild, the baseman missed it, and Copperthwait reached third amid much uproar. The Sioux were all gathered now in a frantic crowd between third and home, yelling like their prototypes, and the Comanches were also noisy.

"Go it, Copperthwait!" shouted his team mates. "Get home and you'll win the game! Steady, now! Look out, look out! Don't let them catch you!"

"Now, Hardy," pleaded the Judge, "for heaven's sake, play ball! Don't let him make this run!"

"Steady, Hardy," said the catcher. "Watch my signs."

The janitor had crept up close to first base.

"Say, judge," he whispered to his honor, who was now dancing like an Indian and watching every move of the pitcher and Copperthwait with devouring anxiety—"say, judge, the jury has come in and is ready with the verdict."

"Oh, to h—— with the jury!" snapped out the judge. "Go on with the game!"

Hardy slammed in the ball straight over the plate, the baseman bunted it for a sacrifice hit, and Copperthwait, who had crept nearly half way, rushed in and slid triumphantly to the plate on his stomach.

"Safe!" yelled the umpire, and pandemonium broke loose.

"I guess safe's the word, all right," muttered the janitor to the deputy, who had instantly started for the prisoner. "I had a wink from the foreman of the jury as he came in."

Home Run Haggerty

And Lamp Hymes Have a Sad Experience Deceiving the Ministerials.

By George William Daley

"Whenever I read in the papers of the sour, cross-grained way these here Brooklyn preachers is a kickin' against Sunday ball in that place I always get to wonderin' whether maybe some of 'em ain't the same guys that played in the memorable game o' the Briggstown Methodis' Conference against the Briggstown Baptist Seminary one Fourth o' July mornin' the first season I made my big name in the Corndroppers' league.

"You know I've always said that women an' baseball don't mix, an' no more do preachers an' baseball. O' course, there may be exceptions. I knew one woman that did understand baseball and Reggie Van Rensselaer was put into college to make a minister out o' him. That's why his guv'nor fondly hoped, but after Reg had shut out a league nine once they flashed big money in front of him and a fine pitcher was saved to the profession. He'd made a bum preacher, too, because when things don't go his way on balls an' strikes he uses awful talk to the umpire, an' who knows but what he might a cut loose some day in the pulpit in the same way an' druv everybody out o' church.?

"Well, Lamp Hymes an' me was just windin' up our supper one night—the third of July it was—when the Alfalfa house bootblack come in an' give us a card an' says a gentleman wanted to see the best pitcher an' ketcher o' the Alfalfas in the hotel parlor.

"I never go in the hotel parlor an' I asked why the guy didn't go in the barroom.

"At that Boots he grinned an' turned over the card, an' it says:

REV. MARK E. TROTTER,

Secretary,

Briggstown Methodist Conference.

"'Oho!' says Lamp. 'Wot you been doin', Hag,' says he, 'turnin' over a new leaf an' findin' religion?'

"'Wot you been doin'?' says I. 'He wants both of us.

"So we walked down into the hotel

"Wot you been doin' Hag, turnin' over a new leaf an' findin' religion?"

parlor an' there was a tall, limp-lookin' man with a long-tailed coat an' a white necktie an' a soft felt hat, only he carried it in his hand, an' he says:

"'To whom have I the pleasure of speakin'—which members of the Alfalfa baseball nine, I mean?'

"'Why, I'm Home Run Haggerty, the famous ketcher. This here is Hymes, one o' our pitchers.'

"'Mr. Lamp Hymes, inventor o' the change o' pace, you mean,' snaps out Lamp. 'Don't git swelled' cause you kin belt the ball. I've known you to sidestep a swift inshoot just as quick as the next.'

"It was a good thing we was in the parlor, or Lamp might a been sorry for that, but his nibs, the Reverend Trotter, he jest smoothed it over.

"'Good! good!' says he, rubbin' his hands. 'And are you engaged for to-morrow morning?'

"'We can't go to church,' says I, quick. 'Mornin' practice is at 9.'

"'Oh, I don't want you to go to church,' says Mr. Trotter. 'I want to give you a chance to earn a $10 bill very easily. Can you come up an' play a game at Briggstown an' get home in time for your afternoon match?'

"As soon as he mentioned money Lamp an' me got interested at once. We said we thought the club rule regardin' mornin' practice would stand fracturin' one day; so he sat down an' looked around to see that no one was listenin' and started in:

"'You see,' he says, 'the Briggstown Methodist conference is in session up at Briggstown and as tomorrow is a holiday some of the younger members of the conference thought they would celebrate by playing a game of baseball. The Briggstown Baptist Seminary challenged us, so it's to be the Methodist Conference against the Baptist college boys tomorrow.

"Lamp and me nodded.

"'Now, these seminary chaps are

"Come on there, Hag! Shake her up! That Mutt can't throw! Come on! Slide!"

much younger than we are,' went on Mr. Trotter, 'an' in lookin' for players we found we had no one we could induce to ketch and no one we would allow to pitch. In order to make the contest interesting we agreed to get as pitcher and catcher some one who could play the game. We will give you $10 apiece. What say you?'

"We said yes, in one breath. After tellin' us what train to take an' other particulars Mr. Trotter sprung this:

"'Now, you know that these seminary youths think they are playing the Briggstown Conference, so you must appear to be ministers. You mustn't wear baseball uniforms. Dress in black, just as I do, and don't use any rough language, nor laugh at any of our poor plays. And again, don't play too well. That might make them suspicious, you know. Let them hit the ball and steal bases and do all sorts o' things till it means runs; then shut down.'

"We said we'd take care o' that part o' it, an' Mr. Trotter trotted out an' we began to chin.

"'Pretty nifty guy for a dominie,' says I. 'He'd ought to be a politician, or manager o' some ball team. Do you s'pose there'll be any one up there that'll know us?'

"'No,' says Lamp. 'Just muff a few fouls an' have a couple o' passed balls, an' I'll throw an outshoot or two over into the next lot an' they'll think we're workers in the vineyard.'

"'Wot's them?' says I.

"'Why, ministers,' says Lamp.

"'Oh,' says I, 'the Reverend Trotter'll be a worker in the diamond to-morrow,' says I. 'Workin' the seminary Baptist fellers.'

"So the next mornin' I borrowed Reggie's full dress white necktie and Josh Hapgood's frock coat an' Pete Brown's black pants, an' bought a white shirt an' choker collar, an' wrapped my mitt an' mask up in a piece o' paper, an' we started out. Lamp was as sober dressed as me, only he had on a soft shirt an' a pair o' black silk gloves. When we got to the railroad station we decided that baseball caps looked too sporty with that rig, an' bought a couple o' black soft-felt hats. Then I practiced callin' Lamp 'brother' all the way up on the train, an' he'd choke every time I said it.

"At Briggstown the air was full o' ministers. Old gray-bearded fellers leanin' on canes, an' others with shawls on 'em, an' stout ones with red faces, an' thin ones with sad eyes, an' young ones that winked at the hired girls an' all that. The Reverend Trotter met us at the station an' introduced us as 'the Reverends Wilson and Williams' very loud, an' then in a soft voice he'd say, lookin' round to see that no Baptists were near: 'These are the ball players we sent for. They'll make that swimmin'-tank bunch look like old rags.' He didn't say just them words, but it was the same thing.

"Well, we went out to the ball ground, an' when I took out the big mitt an' Lamp had slung some speedy ones into it the hull seminary nine gathered round to see us work. Then Lamp took a tumble an' the next ball went over my head an' hit a big feller they called bishop in the back. Then I muffed two or three, an' finally I called to Lamp:

"'Brother, don't throw so hard. They hurt.'

"I thought he'd bust a blood vessel tryin' to keep from laughin,' an' then he put in a wide outshoot that I'd a had to take on my bare hand. So I let it go, an' it winged the Moderator.

"In the meantime the Baptist gang was askin' who we was an' lookin' suspicious, an' the Reverend Trotter he handed out a story to 'em about our havin' been missionaries on Afric's coral strand an' just got back, which made us so sunburned. My busted and twisted fingers, he said, same from me bein' tortured by savages fer spreadin' the blessed gospel. 'You'd ought to be takin' your hats off to them, brethren,' says he, 'instead of suspicionin' 'em.' That quieted the Baptists for awhile.

"We were introduced to the other players on our nine then. The Reverend Trotter he played first; the Reverend Claude Fitchey he played second; the Reverend Dr. Hunnis Wagoner, D. D., LL. D., played short, an' the Reverend Samuel Strange played third. In the outfield were the Reverends Beauchamp, Bodwell an' Wertz.

"We didn't know anybody on the seminary nine, except the pitcher. He was a tall, good lookin' guy, named the Reverend Christopher Mathews. It seems he was a teacher in the school. His hair must a hurt him, for

"Well, I never knew a minister could punch so hard before."

his head was swelled somethin' terrible over his pitchin' ability. But he wasn't a stayer. He was the kind that chuck it up after they've been hit a little an' the chance o' makin' a fine strike-out average is gone.

"Oh, that game was awful. Outside o' never playin's in a minister game again, I never want to umpire a game where they're playin'—not for $100 a game. They made life miserable for the poor feller we had. Let a decision be any way close an' the gang o' preachers an' would-be preachers—which was the seminary bunchJwas down on him like a lot o' wolves. They didn't cuss, but they came perilius near it a number of times; an' then the white-whiskered feller they called Bishop, he'd shake his finger an' say, 'Fie, brother,' an' it'd be all off.

The game was hard fought. Lamp let the seminary fellers hit it hard each innin' till they had a couple o' runs an' the bases full, an' then he'd make 'em pop up fouls or fan 'em. The first seminary feller that tried to steal I lined one down hard to Reverend Dr. Hunnis Wagoner, D. D., LL. D., who covered the bag. It near took his wing off an' went through the Reverend Beauchamp's legs in center, an' the feller that tried to steal went right around. After that I threw them to bases on the bounce.

"At the bat we had a cinch. We'd coach the dominies to get hit or take first on balls, an' then me or Lamp would git up an' clear the bases.

"I didn't try to knock any home runs—just placed liners so they could git 'em. When the ninth inning began we had 18 runs to their 15. We fooled with 'em till they got three on bases, an' then after Lamp had fanned two of 'em, one o' the seminary fellers accidentally hit one o' his swift ones down to third base. The Reverend Samuel Strange picked it up and threw it about eight feet over my head an' the ball was lost, an' four runs came in, making the score 19 to 18 in their favor.

"The Reverend Trotter fanned out for us in our last half, and the Reverend Wertz tried to kill the ball an' knocked up a foul that their ketcher accidentally caught. Then Lamp got up an ripped out a single an' it was up to me. I didn't waste no time. I couldn't git a good swing on account of the darned boiled shirt an' no spikes in my shoes, but I whacked a hard one over the left fielder's head an' we started to run.

"It'd a been all right only for Lamp. The dumb guy run around an' touched the plate, an' then, seein' me turnin' third an' the ball comin' after me, he forgot where he was and began to coach.

"'Come on there, Hag! Shake her up! That mutt can't throw! Come on! Slide!'

"I didn't want to slide in Pete's good pants, but I saw the ketcher waitin' for the ball, an' so I just made one o' my famous dives an' made the plate but it took darn near all but the waistband o' Pete's pants, an' my baseball cap, with 'Alfalfa' on it, popped out o' my pocket an' the ketcher picked it up an' then a riot broke loose.

"The Reverends Trotter an' Wagoner an' Strange got all mixed up in a crowd o' seminary players, an' some seminary professors grabbed me. One o' 'em says: 'You big pirate, you're no more a minister than nothin' at all. You're name is Haggerty, an' you're the catcher of the Alfalfas.'

"I'd a' owned up, only the Reverend Trotter seemed to be clinchin' his missionary in Africa story with one about me havin' played ball before I was a minister an' that I was all right. So I says:

"'Beg pardon, brother, but I'm not used to that kind of talk: I'm the Reverend Elexander Williams.'

"'Reverend nuthin',' hollers another.

"'Wot's the catechism?' came from the outskirts o' the crowd.

"'Yes,' hollers another. 'What's the chief end of man?'

"'Tell 'em, Hag,' whispered Lamp, 'I used to know, but it's slipped me.'

"'Wot's the chief end o' man?' says I. 'Wy, that's easy. The chief end o' man—the chief end o' man is to play ball—o' course—to play ball!'

"At that I laughed an' they all laughed, an' I tried to make out it was a joke. I didn't know whether I'd answered right or not, but I was afraid I hadn't. An' then the big white-whiskered feller says:

"'They're deceiving us! They really are ball players, I do believe. They can't laugh it off.'

"'Yes,' sings out another. 'They're ringers—painted ringers.'

"'That minister must a put in some time out o' doors to pick that up,' says I to myself, an' then the white-whiskered feller says:

"'Now, if you really are what you claim, you certainly can tell us the apostles' creed.'

"'The what?' I asked. A laugh rose. I looked so puzzled.

"'The apostles' creed. Prove to us that you are what you say you are.'

"'Sir,' says I, straightening up, 'it is sadly against my principles to strike a man,' says I, 'much less a brother. But if you call that name again shall forget myself!'

"Well, I never know a minister could punch so hard before, but one soaked me in the neck an' there was a loud, sarcastic laugh, an Lamp swung out with my mask, an' then a diversion come. Out in the middle of the diamond the Reverends Trotter and Wagoner an' Fitchey an' Strange an' their bunch was all mixed up with the Baptist bunch, an' the langwidge comin' out from under that hill o' scratchin', tearin', white-necked, high-collared arms an' legs made me close my eyes. An' then Lamp plucked my sleeve an' see the cops comin' in from the street, an' we left Josh's coat an' most o' Pete's pants an' the Alfalfa cap in the midst o' the howlin' multitude an' took it on the run. We got to the station an' caught a train an' made Alfalfa in time for the afternoon game. But it took all the ten-spot I got to pay for the clothes I'd lost or wrecked, an' Lamp lost a diamond ring.

"We didn't near no more from Briggstown, but I guess they never had another ministerial ball game there—leastwise, none o' us ever played in it."

The Genial Idiot.

The Old-Fashioned Fourth.

By John Kendrick Bangs

"TELL me, Mr. Brief," said the Idiot, suddenly looking up from his plate of enervated wheat root, the latest breakfast food to be served at Mrs. Pedagog's select home for single gentlemen, "can a man cover himself with a fire insurance policy?"

"Not unless he is a very small man and the policy is larger than most of those now in use. What's the matter, can't you keep warm these summer nights?" replied the lawyer, facetiously.

"Oh, dear yes," said the Idiot. "Now that Mrs. Pedagog stores all the natural gas and hot air that you waste in your table talk for use in the furnace, I find my room rather too warm. What I wanted to know about was as to whether or not I could insure myself against fire."

"Do you mean in this world or the next?" asked Mr. Brief. "If the latter, I'm afraid the companies would consider you a poor risk."

"I mean this world," said the Idiot. "I don't intend to desert you in the next, so of course I realize—"

"Oh, I suppose you can have yourself insured against fire," interrupted Mr. Brief. "As long as you conceal the fact from the agents that you spontaneously combust without warning or provocation two or three times a day, and hide from their eyes your deplorable habit of carrying inflammable ideas in that excelsior gray matter you use instead of a brain, the chances are that you could get a small fire insurance policy on yourself. About how much would you want for a total loss—seventy-fifty?"

"Nine-eighty," said the Idiot. "I have six toes on my left foot."

Mr. Brief laughed. "You're a freak at both ends, aren't you?" he said. "Why do you wish to be insured against fire?" he added. "You don't contemplate any rash exposure do you?"

"Well, tomorrow's the Fourth of July," said the Idiot, "and I'm going to celebrate."

"The modern Fourth of July celebration is as harmless as a safety razor," observed the Lawyer, "that is as far as conflagrations are concerned. Nobody sets off firecrackers, or sends up skyrockets, or sizzes pin-wheels any more. As the nation grows older it gets more sensible and the time when one's patriotism was measured by foof noises has gone out."

"Oh—has it!" ejaculated the Idiot. "My dear sir, you reason like a provincial. You needn't think that because the city boy has given up fireworks everybody else has done the same thing. The city boy isn't the only boy in the world—thank heaven. The old-fashioned Fourth of July may have gone out here in this blase old town, but up in the country where there's still some life left in the old folks, they cling to it as joyously as of yore."

"And you are going off to join the young rural hoodlums in their alleged sport, are you?" said the Doctor.

"Hear him!" cried the Idiot. "A man whose profession benefits by the old-fashioned Fourth to the extent of millions of dollars every year calls them rural hoodlums! By Jingo, it looks to me as if there should be a chair in gratitude in our medical schools in order to teach students how to be decently appreciative of the benefits received. Talk about the serpent that turned and stung the hand that warmed him!"

"Tush!" said the Doctor. "Where do the millions come in, I'd like to know. A few burned fingers perhaps—"

"Never sewed an ear on a boy who'd got separated from it in a tussle with a toy cannon, eh?" asked the Idiot.

"Yes," said the Doctor, "but—"

"Or took a dipper and ladled powder out of the eye of a kid who wanted to see how a sizzer worked, or relieved the sufferings of the youth who would sit down on a bomb with a piece of burning wadding clinging to his coattail, or took splinters from the fingers of the youngster who tried to hold on to the stick of a skyrocket at the moment it was fired with an ambition to rise in the world?" continued the Idiot.

"Certainly, I have done all those things," said the Doctor. "But there's no money in it. I don't suppose in all my life I've made $500 on Fourth of July cases. You spoke of millions. There is some difference between millions and a paltry five hundred—or at least there was when I went to school."

"I did, indeed, refer to millions and I was right," said the Idiot. "If you made $500 on the Fourth of July cases it is fair to assume that 10,000 other physicians have done equally well. There is five millions already without counting two or three hundred thousand little fellows who've not made more than half that amount. The Fourth of July of the past was a gold mine to your profession and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for referring to its followers as young hoodlums."

"Sir," said the Doctor, grandly, "you cannot buy my approval with mere money. If I made fifty times $500 out of an iniquitous custom I should still withhold my approval of it."

"Oh, well now that I think of it," agreed the Idiot, "I don't blame you after all. I suppose you naturally object to a system of celebration by which a man can have his leg blown off for nothing by an exploding cannon when you would have charged him $1,000 for cutting it off. Still, you should be generously inclined and do everything you can to help on the American citizen of today fittingly to display the patriotic fervor so many thousands of them feel. For my own part if a man wants to celebrate the Fourth of July by reading Browning to his wife, or in the calm quiet of his study composing rhymed advertising couplets for health food companies, I say let him do it. If an electric fan in the dining room of a club satisfies his yearnings for pinwheels; if a succession of Scotch highballs popping from dawn to midnight is more pleasing to his soul than an equal number of colored ones fired from a select series of Roman candles after dark; if blowing up his children for their shortcomings is a preferable Fourth of July occupation to setting off a package of giant crackers under a discarded tomato can, by all means let him go ahead in his own way, say I. I'll never interfere with him, but for myself—ah, that is another story. No Browning or Marie Corelli for me, with a chance to bellow forth the glowing periods of the Declaration of Independence to a howling mob of patriots through a megaphone. I'll never celebrate the Fourth by writing squibs while I can fire off a whole pack of them under the unsuspecting chair of my dear old grandfather. You needn't talk to me of the joys of the electric fan with a real pin-wheel fastened on a nail in front of a haystack waiting to sizz its sweet young life out in response to the magic touch of my lighted breva cigar. I'd rather blow up the band-stand with a barrel of giant powder than fire the cook; and as for the Roman-candle as against the high-ball give me the former every time. You may singe your front hair, or incinerate one of your hands, or lose a portion of your nose, or burn the rich facade of your fancy waistcoat to ashes when one of 'em shoots off at the wrong end, but you won't have such an awful head on your shoulders next morning as you would have if you swallowed an equal number of Bixby's best Scotches with soda on the side. There is more music and less headache in the popping torpedo than in the exploding champagne cork, and he that reckoneth upon the morrow will find himself better prepared for thought if he clings only unto the former and leaves the latter to those whose idea of patriotism is to look too often upon the cup that is red, white and blue."

"Say, why don't you offer your services to one of the national committees?" asked the Doctor. "You would make one of the most effervescent campaign orators in the business. Such a flow of language; sir, you are a veritable geyser of speech."

"Nothing in it," said the Idiot. "My convictions on public questions are too deep to enable me to speak convincingly on the stump in favor of any candidate."

"Hoh! Convictions, eh? May I ask what your convictions are?" queried the Bibliomaniac.

"I have only one," said the Idiot. "That is that it doesn't make much difference who is president of the United States as long as——"

Here the Idiot hesitated.

"Well? As long as what?" demanded the Lawyer.

"As long as the American boy from four to ninety-six is found celebrating the Fourth of July in any old way. If you're going to stop that, we'd better put up the shutters and elect a receiver," said the Idiot.

Detecting Forgery.

(St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

"I am not an expert in chirography, but I have at least made enough of a study of handwriting to tell why it is often easy to detect the forgery of a name, though even the man whose name has been forged may declare the handwriting a perfect replica of his own," Mr. Arnold Keating says. "Of course you know—everybody knows, for that matter—that a man or woman never writes his or her name twice exactly in the same way. There is always a slight difference, and where two signatures of the same name appear identically alike it is safe to assume that one or both are forgeries. But suppose the signature has been forged but once, suppose the handwriting of which it is an exact copy has been destroyed or is not obtainable, of what avail is the comparative method then? The exact comparison cannot be employed, but other almost infallible comparisons are still available. When a child is taught how to write, at first its penmanship is severely stiff and cramped; then it becomes very much like that in the copy book, but after this is discarded the child's character begins to creep into its handwriting. There are little idiosyncracies apparent that are not to be found in the chirography of other children, and this manifestation of character in writing continues to change with development until about the age of 25, when a person's character is fixed and their handwriting from that time on continues about the same. The forger's copy of the signature or writing will appear to be exactly like that of the man but when examined under a powerful microscope the tiny evidences of character that appear in every loop and line will be found to be largely missing, for the same character is not behind the pen. It is in the minute details that the forgery is discovered. Then again a man's mental condition will impress itself upon his writing. If he is nervous, bubbling over with joy or depressed, the fact will be apparent to the expert in writing. If the alleged handwriting doesn't show traces of the mental condition the man was really in at the time he was supposed to have written a certain letter or signed a certain letter, the signature or the writing is a forgery. These are some of the ways by which an expert detects even the most successful forgeries."

Nails Record Sickness

(St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

"One who makes a close study of finger nails will find many curious things about them to excite his wonder and interest," says F. De Donato, who is an expert on such matters, "but none more so than the stories of physical condition told in their growth. You know the nail of a person in good health grows at the rate of about one-sixteenth of an inch each week—slightly more than many authorities believe—but during illness or after an accident or during times of mental depression this growth is not only affected and retarded so far as its length is concerned, but also as regards its thickness. The very slightest illness will thus leave an indelible mark on the nails which may be readily detected as the nail grows out. If one has a sudden attack, such as acute rheumatism, which sends the temperature bounding upward to 104 or 105 within the space of two or three hours, it will be found on the nails, indicating the difference in thickness of growth between the time when health was enjoyed and the thin growth of the ill period. If the illness is one that comes on gradually, like typhoid fever, for example, instead of a ridge a gentle incline will appear on the nails. Should one have an arm broken the thick ridge can be seen only on the fingers of the one hand, but in all cases of general sickness the ridge or slope appears on the fingers of both hands. When one has passed through a period of extreme excitement or mental depression, the fact will be imprinted on the nails either with an abrupt ridge or a gentle slope, according to the acuteness of the mental influence. In no instance can the marks of illness, accident or mental condition be clearly seen on the nail until after the growth has carried the line beyond the white or half moon portion of it, but a week or two subsequent to any of these things the ridge or slope may be found on the nails, usually readily visible to the eyes, but if not the mark may be found by running the tip of the finger down any of the nails."

Safeguarded.

Mr. Dash—Is your cook amiable when you bring home unexpected company to dinner?

Mr. Rash—Oh, we have a guaranteed asbestos curtain between our dining room and kitchen.—Cincinnati Tribune.